



PHASERIP

ROLEPLAYING GAME

ISSUE ZERO

PRIMER

A PHASERIP PRIMER

READ THIS FIRST

This primer exists to quickly and succinctly introduce the core concepts of the Phaserip system, so anyone can read through and begin playing as soon as possible. However, if you are a new player, Phaserip assumes your sole responsibility is to embody your character, to bring them to life within the game, and to act out your role in a convincing manner. As such, even this Primer is unnecessary for someone to begin playing.

In a game of Phaserip, each Player adopts the role of a fictional character, and play-acts their adventures with other player's characters. The events of a game take place in the *gameworld*, a shared imagined space that manifests in the form of a conversation between the players and the **GM**. Throughout the rules, we use certain acronyms that are common parlance among role players. "**GM**" stands for "**Game Master**". This is the judge and referee of the game who uses a combination of creativity, common sense, and the Phaserip system, to facilitate the game. The GM describes the gameworld for the players, and the results of their choices. A GM also takes on the roles of *everyone else* inhabiting the gameworld, from neighbors to villains, even alien slimes (if your gameworld has alien slimes). The term we use collectively for every character in the game that isn't portrayed by one of the players is **NPCs**, meaning "**Non-Player Character**". The **gameworld** is the setting, anything from the Old West to the Far Future. The examples in this Primer are set in the romanticized Middle Ages of British folklore.

This system uses ten-sided dice, abbreviated as "**d10**". More specifically, the majority of the time players will be rolling "Percentile Dice", or two d10s, one die counting as the "tens" digit, the other counting as the "ones" digit, for a result between 01 to 00 (100). As such, its best for each player to have 2 d10s on hand, either of differing colours, or one specifically designed for percentile rolls. Or, if your GM is anything like me, he'll just dump a pile of them on the centre of the coffee table for anyone to grab two as they need them.



The Illustrations

This rough, unformatted and unedited edition of the Phaserip PRIMER uses Illustrations by Dan Content, one of the many fantastic artists during the Golden Age of Book Illustration whose work have slipped into obscurity. Content studied under the famed Dean Cornwell and Harvey Dunn, and built his career providing illustrations for early issues of Colliers, Cosmopolitan, Good Housekeeping, Liberty, and Reader's Digest.

OVERVIEW

Each Player in Phaserip adopts the role of a character, henceforth referred to in these rules as a 'Hero' (used as a neutral term). Players are given a **Character Sheet** that defines the capabilities and available resources of their Hero in system terms. There are three types of characteristics recorded on the Character Sheet: **Attributes**, **Traits**, and **Factors**. Attributes represent a hero's physical and mental abilities, Traits record significant skills and proficiencies, while Factors are pools of points that represent resources that Players may accumulate and "spend" when certain events arise in the game.

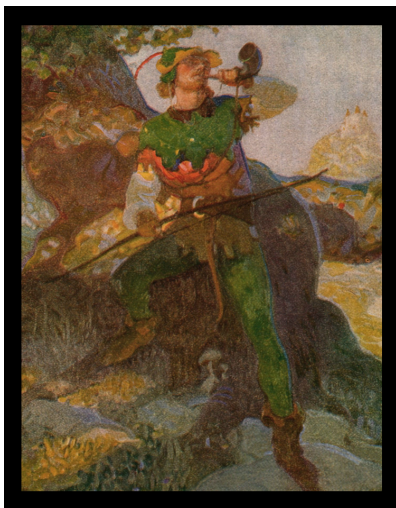
Attributes are the basic abilities of a Hero, ranked on a scale from one to ten, with 3 representing the average human adult. The benchmarks on this scale are identified with a specific adjective called an **Echelon**. Each Echelon corresponds to a column on the main resolution chart – **The Action Resolution Graph! (ARG!)**. When a player describes their intended actions during the game, the GM will assess the likelihood of failure based on the Hero's Attributes and Echelons. Most actions in the game are *automatic*, meaning the Hero is more than capable of completing the task with little effort. But if the action is especially difficult or dangerous, the GM may call for the Player to make a roll.

The Player rolls percentile dice and announces the result. The result of the dice roll is compared to the corresponding row of The ARG! resolution chart. Where that row intersects with the column corresponding to the Echelon of the Attribute used is a box containing one of 5 colours: *violet, white, green, blue, and red*. We call this colour the **Phase Result**, and it determines the degree of success (or failure) of the attempted action. Generally, a Green, Blue, or Red result indicates *success*, while a white or violet result indicates *failure*. During combat, the Phase Results often indicate specific effects, such as stunning an opponent or parrying an attack.

The process of rolling dice, and comparing the rolled number to The ARG! to find the Phase Result is collectively referred to as a **GEST**, an acronym for "Gauge of Extraordinary Skill or Talent". GESTs are the heart of the Phaserip system, almost all other rules are simply variation on this algorithm, or modify it in some way.

PRIMER

Let's begin by looking at what a typical Character Sheet might look like in Phaserip, using as an example that most archetypal of heroes from British folklore, Robin Hood. Besides one of the most recognizable and adapted characters in fiction and media, Robin Hood is also the inspiration for numerous modern superheroes.



ROBIN HOOD

ATTRIBUTES

EXCELLENT FIGHTING
UNCANNY AGILITY
GOOD STRENGTH
EXCELLENT ENDURANCE
TYPICAL REASON
EXCELLENT INTUITION
GOOD PSYCHE

FACTORS

STAMINA – 60
ARÊTE – 30

TRAITS

ARCHERY! CHICANERY LEADERSHIP
MARKSMAN OUTLAW RIDING
SWASHBUCKLING

PARAPHERNALIA

BOW DAGGER HUNTING HORN LEATHER ARMOUR
QUIVER OF ARROWS ROPE SWORD

Check out the seven pairings of adjectives and nouns on the left. All Heroes share **7 PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES**, essential faculties possessed to some degree by every character in the game. In this case that is *Fighting, Agility, Strength* and *Endurance* (referred to as a Hero's **Physical Attributes**), and *Reason, Intuition, and Psyche*, (a Hero's **Mental Attributes**).

In Phaserip each Attribute is qualified by a descriptor or adjective, called an **ECHELON** (actually, you can call it whatever you like, we just like fancy words). Echelons reflect the character's competency in that Attribute, and other characters with the same Echelon in an Attribute are of comparable ability.

ECHELONS

Phaserip uses 10 standard Echelons, in order from weakest to most potent:

ECHELON		RANK	RATING
FEEBLE	Significantly Below Average	1	2
PUNY	Below Average	2	3
TYPICAL	Average	3	5
GOOD	Above Average	4	10
EXCELLENT	Significantly Above Average	5	15
UNCANNY	Peak Human	6	20
FANTASTIC	Enhanced	7	35
AMAZING	Superhuman	8	55
INCREDIBLE	Monstrous	9	90
UNEARTHLY	Godlike	10	150

Each Echelon is associated with 2 numbers: their **RANK** and **RATING**.

An **Echelon Rank** is the sequential position of the Echelon on a scale of 1 to 10.

An **Echelon Rating** is a benchmark number on an exponential scale, showing the relative discrepancy in power between the Echelons.

Each number is used for different small functions in (and before) a game, but generally it's not important to know these when playing the game.

FIGHTING is a measure of a Hero's prowess, pugnacity, and raw hand-to-hand combat ability, a combination of natural talent, training, and experience. *Robin Hood possesses Excellent Fighting, indicating he is significantly above average when it comes to handling himself in fisticuffs or sword fights.*

AGILITY is an evaluation of a Hero's nimbleness, deftness, and reflexes. Agility is used to dodge, throw, aim, or any other task that requires accuracy and dexterity. *Robin Hood's Uncanny Agility reflects both his peerless talent with a bow and acrobatic coordination.*

STRENGTH is an estimate of a Hero's might and physical power. Strength is used to lift, carry, and generally exert force on objects or others, including causing damage in close combat. *Robin Hood possesses Good Strength, meaning he is above average, but nowhere near the brawn of Little John.*

ENDURANCE represents a Hero's toughness, fortitude and constitution. Endurance determines a Hero's ability to recover from injury, resist disease, and sustain exertion. *Robin Hood's Excellent Endurance indicates that he is hale and hardy, in much better shape and harder to permanently injure than an average fellow.*

REASON evaluates a Hero's ingenuity, deduction, and intellect. Reason is used to build and operate technology, make scientific, and learn new skills. *Robin Hood's Reason is Typical. He is clever enough, but not given to scholarly pursuits or engineering.*

This is important to note: a Hero can be wily and resourceful regardless of their Reason Echelon. The Reason attribute does not represent the various concepts of Intelligence overall, rather specifically a creatively scientific, or scholarly approach. It is up to the Player to provide their Hero's cunning and strategy.

INTUITION estimates a Hero's wits, perceptiveness, and situational awareness. Intuition determines if a Hero notices clues, observes subtle or hidden actions, and Initiative in Combat. *Robin Hood possesses Excellent Intuition, displaying his keen senses, quick reactions, and high-flying repartee.*

PSYCHE represents a Hero's willpower, courage and resolve. Psyche is used to overcome terror, resist mental domination or supernatural control, and using psychic or magical abilities. *Robin Hood faced overwhelming odds, turning to outlawry and organizing a band of rebels against the insurgent monarch, King John. His Good Psyche shows his conviction, but he does not (in most tales) face many supernatural threats and has no training in any form of mental discipline.*

Looking back over Robin Hood's character sheet, we can now get a general sense of his strengths and weaknesses. Overall, with three attributes rated Excellent, two Good, and an Uncanny and Typical as the two extremes, Robin is a paragon among men, capable of performing great deeds and obviously the stuff of legends, without being superhuman or godlike in power. When Robin's player encounters a situation in the game wherein the Hero is reasonably likely to fail, the GM decides which Attribute best applies, the associated Echelon then indicating the Hero's chance of success.

For example, Robin Hood's Strength of Good indicates that, while not the strongest of fellows, he can easily lift up to 200 lbs. However, imagine that Robin somehow gets trapped under a fallen tree trunk, weighing close to 400 lbs. Robin must escape soon, or Maid Marian will fall prey to an ambush by the notorious Sheriff of Nottingham!

This is where GESTs come into play...

GESTs

"Gest" is a somewhat archaic word for a *notable feat, deed or exploit*. In Phaserip we use **GEST** as an acronym for a "Gauge of Extraordinary Skill or Talent". A GEST Roll is made whenever a Hero is attempting an exceptional act or extraordinary feat. No roll is required when a Hero wants to perform a trivial or routine action: driving to the store, using the internet, etc. (though what actions are trivial or routine for a Hero does greatly depend on the game's setting. A modern day Hero should have no issue using a computer, while a Hero from the Middle Ages might find it a bit of a struggle). The GM will decide when an intended action requires a GEST Roll.

When attempting a GEST, a Player rolls percentile dice.

The result is then compared to the corresponding row and column on **The ARG!** (Action Resolution Graph!)

THE ACTION RESOLUTION GRAPH! (ARG!)										
ROLL	FEEBLE FB	PUNY PU	TYPICAL TY	GOOD GD	EXCELLENT EX	UNCANNY UC	FANTASTIC FA	AMAZING AM	INCREDIBLE IN	UNEARTHLY UN
1				5		1				
2 - 5				5						
6 - 7			7							
8 - 9		9								
10 - 15	15									
16 - 19										16
20 - 25									20	
26 - 29								26		
30 - 35							30			
36 - 39						36				
40 - 45					40					
46 - 49				46						46
50 - 55			50						50	
56 - 59		56						56		
60 - 65	60						60			
66 - 69						66				
70 - 75					70					
76 - 79				76						
80 - 85			80							80
86 - 89		86							86	
90 - 95	90						90			
96 - 97					96					
98 - 99			98							
100										

Behold, The ARG! Master of Fate! Purveyor of Destiny!

This colourful chart forms the backbone of the entire Phaserip system. When a GEST is rolled, the dice results determines the row and the Echelon used for the GEST dictates the column of The ARG!
(Actually, this is just a small slice of The ARG!, but all that's necessary to understand how it's used)

PHASE RESULTS

The ARG! provides one of 5 **PHASE RESULTS**, each delineated by a colour, that determines *if* and *how* well a Hero succeeds at the attempted GEST.

RED PHASE RESULT	MASTERSTROKE!
BLUE PHASE RESULT	CRITICAL SUCCESS
GREEN PHASE RESULT	SUCCESS
WHITE PHASE RESULT	FAILURE
VIOLET PHASE RESULT	CRITICAL FAILURE

In a lot of cases, a GEST is simply a matter of “yes or no”, or “success or failure” in which case a Green Phase Result or above indicates the affirmative, while a White or below Phase Result indicates the negative.

INTENSITIES

A GEST roll may be modified by the **INTENSITY** of the action attempted, designated by an Echelon set by the GM:

- If the Intensity of a GEST is *below* the Echelon of the Attribute used for the GEST, a **Green Phase Result** is all that is needed to succeed.
- To succeed at a GEST where the Intensity is *equal* to the Echelon used, the player must roll a **Blue Phase Result**.
- If the Intensity is *above* the Hero's relevant Echelon, the player would need a **Red Phase Result** to succeed.

To continue with our previous scenario, Robin Hood is trapped beneath an overturned tree trunk weighing roughly 400 lbs, so the GM sets the Intensity of Robin's GEST as Excellent. As this is one Echelon higher than Robin's Might Echelon, he would need a Red Phase Result on his GEST to succeed. Or Robin's player, this would mean a roll of 98 or better!

While possible, those aren't great odds, and Robin might briefly consider a few alternative plans. For instance, Robin might instead attempt to hack away at the wood using his dagger. The GM would determine the success of this by comparing the Material Might of the log and the dagger.

MATERIAL MIGHT

One of the most common *Intensities* employed during the game is the **MATERIAL MIGHT** (MM) of inanimate objects, which determines the ease of breaking through them.

MATERIAL MIGHT	
FEEBLE	coal, feathers, paper
PUNY	crystal, lead, wood
TYICAL	ice, plastic, rubber
GOOD	asphalt, brick, soft metals
EXCELLENT	concrete, iron, meteorite
UNCANNY	plexi-glass, kevlar, obsidian
FANTASTIC	reinforced concrete, steel
AMAZING	basalt, solid stone, titanium
INCREDIBLE	diamond, super-heavy alloys
UNEARTHLY	adamant, cargonite, mithril

As the Material Might of wood is Puny, and steel is five Echelons above that, the dagger would easily cut into the log. Unfortunately, this being an exceptionally large chunk of wood, the process of chipping away at it to even cut it in half would take a very long time – the GM rules roughly 3 hours, which is probably rather generous.

This is a prime example of the GM using common sense to interpret the rules – Robin is in a prone position, restricted in movement, lacking a proper tool for the job, using a knife primarily designed for puncturing opponents. If Robin was able to cut through the log like butter, or saw through it with no effort, that would feel like the gameworld is a cartoon. While there are advanced rules that discuss the thickness of objects, something like this is obvious enough that it's easier to leave in the hands of GM judgment in most cases.

Regardless, Robin is in a hurry, with Marian unaware of the Sheriff's trap, so he needs to come up with a different plan. Robin could instead decide to use his hunting horn to summon the aid of any Merry Men that happened to be within earshot. The GM rules that this would depend on the result of a Luck Roll...

LUCK ROLLS

A **LUCK ROLL** is made when a GM wants to let Fate decide events or circumstances beyond a Hero's control. A Luck Roll is executed in the same manner as a GEST, with the Player or GM rolling Percentile Dice, comparing the roll to The ARG!, and the Phase Result determining success. A Luck Roll is always made on the **Typical** Echelon. The likelihood of the occurrence sets the Phase Result needed, as indicated:

LUCK ROLL	
Likely, A Believable Occurance	GREEN PHASE RESULT
Improbable, Extremely Coincidental	BLUE PHASE RESULT
Deus Ex Machina	RED PHASE RESULT

As Robin is in Sherwood Forest, it's believable or even likely that one or more Merry Men might be within hearing distance to respond to Robin's call for aid, so the GM decides the Luck Roll needs only a Green Phase Result to succeed – basically 50/50 odds. Much better chances than Robin making that Red Phase Result to actually lift the log.

Robin Hood could come up with any number of other plans to free himself. Maybe he tries tying a rope around the log and attaching one end to an arrow, attempting to use his skill at Archery to shift the log. Sounds pretty unlikely to me, but this depends on what the GM deems possible. Regardless, let's assume for now that Robin manages to escape this predicament and move on to other examples...

OPPOSED ROLLS

An **OPPOSED ROLL** occurs when a Hero is attempting a GEST and another character is actively attempting to resist or otherwise prevent them from succeeding. For an Opposed Roll, the Intensity of the GEST is determined by the relevant Attribute of the opponent. An arm wrestling match would require an Opposed Roll using the Hero's Strength (semi-trailer truck and glam rock soundtrack are optional), with their opponent's Strength setting the Intensity. We went over this previously (but this time we have a chart!)

INTENSITY VS ECHELON	PHASE RESULT NEEDED
BELOW	GREEN PHASE RESULT
EQUAL	BLUE PHASE RESULT
HIGHER	RED PHASE RESULT

Robin Hood must now race to Maid Marian's location before the Sheriff arrives. Unfortunately, to reach Marian, Robin must make his way past a group of King's Guardsmen posted on the main road. Wanting to avoid a fight (so he can save his energy for the inevitable clash with the Sheriff), Robin decides to try and trick the Guards into letting him pass. Taking a moment to disguise himself beneath a peasant's cloak, Robin attempts to convince the Guardsman that he is merely a villager passing through on his way home. The GM decides this will require an Intuition GEST, with the guards' Reason setting the Intensity. In this case, the guards are all of Typical Intelligence, meaning that Robin, with his Excellent Intuition, only needs a Green Phase result to succeed. Alternately, the GM might roll GESTs for the Guards, with Robin's Intuition setting the Intensity, meaning a Guard would need a Red Phase Result to see past the ruse. Neither way is better or worse, it simply depends on what approach the GM thinks fits the situation better. Three GEST rolls with a low chance of success might increase the tension of the situation, but would take longer.

TRAITS

GEST rolls are also affected by a Hero's **TRAITS**, characteristics that define a Hero's unique skills and talents.

Traits modify GEST Rolls in two ways: **PHASE SHIFTS** and **ECHELON SHIFTS**.

PHASE SHIFTS

A **Phase Shift(PS)** is applied *after* the GEST is rolled, and alters the Phase Result. *For example, a Hero who scored a Green Phase Result on a GEST that received a +1PS would read it as a Blue Phase Result.*

Robin Hood possesses the Trait RIDING. If he were to attempt a complicated horseback maneuver, such as maneuvering down a sheer cliff-face, the GM may call for an Agility GEST, and as this is an active use of his RIDING Trait, Robin's player can modify the result of the GEST by one Phase.

ECHELON SHIFTS

An **Echelon Shift (ES)**, on the other hand, is applied *before* a roll, and alters the Echelon used for the GEST. *For example, a Hero of Typical Agility with a +1ES would compare the results of their roll to the Good Echelon on The ARG!*

If the aforementioned horse were to become spooked by a phantom and Robin Hood attempted to calm it down before he's thrown from the saddle, the GM may call for a Psyche GEST and allow Robin's player a +1ES to their roll to represent how their Riding Trait implies experience dealing with the moods of horses. Thus, Robin rolls the GEST as if he possessed Excellent Psyche.

Whether a Trait provides an Echelon Shift or Phase Shift modifier to a GEST depends on whether they are applied **actively** or **passively**. If a Hero is attempting a task that specifically employs one of their Traits (such as a character with the Trait **Science** attempting to mix a chemical compound), they are *actively* using that Trait, and receive a Phase Shift modifier to the GEST. On the other hand, a passive use of a Trait provides an Echelon Shift bonus in situations where either the Trait does not directly apply (such as when the Trait is used to supplement an action primarily employing another characteristic), or when a player is engaged in an *Opposed Roll*.

This is important to note: *Besides one specific exception that we'll discuss later, Traits always provide a Passive Bonus to Opposed Rolls, including Combat.*

There is one other important distinction between Phase Shifts and Echelon Shifts: Echelon Shifts are *cumulative*, while Phase Shifts are not. In other words, Echelon Shifts can be combined or added together in cases where the GM rules that multiple Traits apply equally to the task at hand.

A GM will occasionally provide **CIRCUMSTANTIAL MODIFIERS** to a GEST, on top of any Traits used.

Circumstantial Modifiers are Echelon Shifts arising from situations external to the Hero. *For example, a heavy rainfall could affect a Hero's Agility GEST or the gravity of another planet might affect a Strength GEST.* In cases where negative and positive ES apply to a GEST, simply subtract the total negative modifiers from positive modifiers, applying the result to the roll, negatively if the result is below zero.

Let's briefly revisit the situation where Robin Hood tries to bluff his way past some guards, halfheartedly disguised under a peasant's cloak. Robin's player suggests that the Trait CHICANERY should apply to this roll, and The GM agrees, but also applies a -2ES Circumstantial Modifier to the GEST, because these guards are specifically on the lookout for Hood trying to get past them. Subtracting 2 from 1 gives us a final ES of -1, so Robin's Intuition GEST would be made at Good instead of Excellent. (If the rolls were alternately made for the Guards, the Negative and Positive ES would be reversed, and they'd each receive a +1ES to their Reason GESTs.)

Phase Shifts do not "stack." Only one Phase Shift ever affects a single roll. Echelon Shifts from the Hero's Traits also don't combine with Phase Shifts, but other Echelon Shifts can. In the very rare chance that a GEST could receive a negative *and* a positive Phase Shift modifier, the negative Phase Shift takes precedence.

FACTORS

Looking back again to Robin Hood's Character Sheet, listed as Factors are **STAMINA**, and **ARÊTE**. **Stamina** and **Arête** are associated with "point pools", which are likely to change frequently during the course of play. Both Factors will increase or decrease in points when triggered by certain situations in the game.

STAMINA

Stamina represents a Hero's ability to defend against and weather physical attacks. A Hero's Stamina starts as the sum of the Echelon Ratings of their Physical Attributes (Fighting, Agility, Strength, and Endurance). *For example, a Hero with Typical in every Physical Attribute would start with 20 points of Stamina (5 + 5 + 5 + 5).*

Robin Hood's Stamina pool is equal to the Echelon Ratings of his Physical Attributes. With Excellent (15) Fighting and Endurance, Good (10) Strength, and Uncanny (20) Agility, Robin starts the game with 60 points of Stamina. Robin's Stamina will decrease if his opponents make successful attacks against him in combat.

If a Hero runs out of Stamina (their point pool is reduced to zero or lower), they run the risk of taking grievous or debilitating wounds (in game terms, the loss of Echelons from Attributes; this is dealt with in more depth in the introduction to the combat system, below).

A Hero can regain lost Stamina, up to the original total, through rest and healing. The pool's maximum/default only changes if the Echelons of one or more of the Hero's Physical Attributes permanently changes.

Robin Hood takes an arrow to the leg, a wound that ends up costing him an Echelon of Agility. This reduces his Stamina's max/default to 55 points. (Excellent (15) Fighting, Agility, Endurance + Good (10) Strength).



ARÊTE

Arête (pronounced “ἄρετή” - I just say “Era -Tae”) symbolizes a Hero's resolve and virtuousness. The term comes from Ancient Greece, birthplace of the concept of “Heroes”. Arête is a complex term in ancient Greek philosophy, but often used in the Homeric Tradition to describe a Hero's bravery and effectiveness. In Phaserip, Arête is a resource that players can draw upon to affect the results of GEST Rolls.

Let's return briefly to our very first example with Robin Hood, where we found him trapped under a log. Robin only had a small chance at succeeding to lift the log off of himself. He needed a Red Phase Result on his Strength GEST, and rolling on the Good Echelon of The ARG! That would mean Robin's player would need to roll a 98 or better! But let's say there were no alternatives. Robin needed to get that Red Phase Result, needed to muster his might and cast aside that log to save his lady love. In times of such dire need, Heroes can call upon their reserve of Arête to essentially “purchase” the Phase Result needed.

Arête is represented by a pool of points, earned for acting heroically and responsibly, or lost for acting selfishly or immorally. More than anything else, Arête is what demarks a Hero from a layman. It is both an internal and external force representing the flow of the universe that favours good over evil, allowing a Hero to push themselves beyond their base faculties.

A Wager of 5 points of Arête is always necessary before any GEST Roll when a Hero intends to influence the outcome. A player must announce their intention to spend Arête before making a roll. Once a player rolls the GEST, Arête is then spent, on a point-for-point basis, to adjust the dice result as desired.

Naturally, there are some caveats:

- Even if a GEST Roll turned out good enough that there is no need to adjust it, the initial wager of 5 points of Arête is still lost. Otherwise, though, the initial wager is assumed included in the points spent.
- There are certain GESTs a Hero cannot spend Arête to alter. These are each specific circumstances that a GM can explain if they come up in a game, but in general the exceptions are based on the concept that using Arête represents a choice on the part of the Hero. Thus, Arête can only be spent on things that a Hero does, not things that *happen to* a Hero. *For example, Arête cannot be used to influence Luck Rolls.*
- While a player does not have to decide or declare how much Arête they intend to spend on a roll when wagering on a GEST, there is one situation where a limitation is placed on this. If a player rolls a **Violet Phase Result**, this is referred to as a **FUMBLE**. In many situations, this result can carry with it some very inconvenient or even disastrous consequences, beyond simply failing the attempted action. As such, the temptation might be to simply increase it to a **White Phase Result**, taking a simple failure instead of the “Critical Failure”. Unfortunately, no. To change a Violet Phase Result, enough Arête must be spent to increase it to a **Green Phase Result**.

Robin Hood decides he needs to get this damn log off of himself, so his player declares that she's going to spend Arête to pull off a Strength of Feet...er, Feat of Strength. Robin's Arête pool is reduced by 5 points and his player makes the GEST Roll. She rolls a 65, a Green Phase Result. Robin needs at least a 98, which means it's going to cost 33 points of Arête, minus the initial wager. Robin's Arête pool is reduced by an additional 28 points and he grunts and heaves and thinks of Marian while he finally gets that log off...

Similar to Stamina, a Hero's starting Arête total is based on the sum of the **Echelon Ratings** of the Hero's **Mental Attributes**. Unlike Stamina, this total may increase beyond this initial sum without any Mental Attributes increasing.

Robin Hood's starting Arête pool is equal to the Echelon Ratings of his Mental Attributes. With Excellent (15) Intuition, Typical (5) Reason, and Good (10) Psyche, Robin starts the game with 30 points of Arête. If Robin were to earn an additional 90 points of Arête during the course of a game, he would retain a total of 120 points.

A Hero earns Arête through Heroic deeds, selfless acts, and meeting responsibilities. Defeating a villain or thwarting their plots, preventing or solving a crime, and saving a life, are all acts that will earn a Hero Arête. As the granting of Arête rewards is at the discretion of the GM, and will likely depend on the game's setting or premise, we won't go into specifics now.

Robin Hood foils a plot by Guy of Guisborne to frame Goode Sister Margaret for witchcraft in order to blackmail her father. In a final duel, Robin solidly humiliates Guy and sends him running back to Nottingham. The GM awards Robin 90 points of Arête, 60 for saving the Sister from the pyre, and 30 for defeating Guy in combat.

Likewise, a Hero can *lose* Arête if they engage in heinous or immoral acts. To an extent, this depends on the moral code of the Hero themselves. The more serious the offense, the greater the penalty, with the harshest punishment reserved for the murder of a living being.

Robin Hood does not have a moral compunction against killing enemy soldiers in wartime, or the corrupt guardsmen serving as thugs for the Sheriff of Nottingham, but if Robin were to accidentally kill an innocent peasant who just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, he would immediately lose all of his Arête points.

At the very least, a murder causes the loss of all Arête, even if it was an accident or unintentional on the part of the Hero. In most cases, the murderer will lose a further 100 points of Arête, putting them 100 points in the negative. The Hero will need to earn this back as **atonement**.

A Hero's Arête pool refreshes daily (as long as the Hero gets a good night's sleep) following these rules:

- If the Hero's Arête total is *greater* than the starting total, it remains the same.
- If the Hero's Arête total is *less than* the starting total, the Hero regains Arête *up to* the *current* sum of their Mental Attribute's Echelon Ratings.
- If the Hero's Arête total is *less than zero*, they are in **atonement**, and the negative total remains the same until it is raised above zero through Arête rewards.



INTERMISSION



(LAST KNOWN PICTURE OF JIM BUNCH AND THEOPHILIUS, RESIDENTS RECALL HEARING JIM SAY "I JUST DON'T LIKE THE WAY THOSE BIRDS ARE LOOKING AT US...")

SOMETHING SPECIAL

You may have noticed there is one category on Robin Hood's character sheet we have not discussed yet: that marked **PARAPHERNALIA**. Obviously, this is just a list of equipment. In game terms, however, we call these **Special Attributes**.

SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES are assigned Echelons just like Primary Attributes. Essentially the only difference between Primary and Special Attributes is that the former are common to all Heroes, while the latter are specific to each Hero.

Types of Special Attributes include: **POWERS** (as in superpowers - flight, invulnerability, x-ray vision, all the good stuff, as well as Psionics, Magik, and Cybernetics), **LIMITATIONS** (specific and unusual weaknesses), and the aforementioned **PARAPHERNALIA** (basically, *stuff* - any significant equipment, arms, or armour a Hero keeps on their person).

If you are wondering why none of the Paraphernalia on Robin Hood's Character Sheet are assigned Echelons, this is because it is unnecessary when all are common or standard trappings for the setting. A dagger is a dagger, so if the GM has a reference sheet with the Echelons of all the 'standard trappings', (usually just their Material Might), it isn't necessary to include them. If, however, a Hero was carrying some unique or unusual stuff, then it would be useful to have the Echelon on hand.

There are also **SPECIAL TRAITS**, that is, any Trait that provides a particular advantage or disadvantage beyond Echelon or Phase Shifts. *Robin Hood possesses the Special Trait MARKSMAN, allowing him to ignore distance penalties when shooting a Ballistic weapon.*



While on the subject of Traits, note that Robin Hood's **ARCHERY!** Trait is punctuated with an exclamation mark. This indicates that the Hero possesses **Ultimate Skill!** in said Trait. **Ultimate Skill!** is for those rare few individuals whose mix of talent, training, and experience lead to total mastery of a skill. What this means in game terms is that any GEST resulting from specific use of a Hero's **Ultimate Skill!** is rolled at the Unearthly Echelon, *regardless* of the associated or applicable Attribute. No further Echelon Shifts (negative or positive) are ever applied to this roll, but Phase Shifts apply as usual.

When Robin fires his bow and the GM calls for a GEST Roll, instead of using his UNCANNY Agility Echelon, Robin treats his Agility as UNEARTHLY. Moreover, when the GEST is not Opposed (such as when Robin is taking part in an Archery contest, firing at a target board), he can still apply a Phase Shift modifier to the roll for an active use of the Trait.

And that's about it for every major part of the system except for...

COMBAT!

COMBAT in Phaserip is based upon the premise "quick and ordered mayhem." Attacks and Defensive moves are handled in much the same way as any other actions in the game, resolved primarily by way of **Combat GESTs**. However, there are a few extra wrinkles to deal with the confusion and chaos of a melee, as well as the perilous outcomes of battle.

Whereas most events in the game take place in a rough correlation to real time, malleable and advancing forward as needed. During Combat Phasering instead breaks time and actions down into a series of manageable **Panels** and **Pages**, while distance is measured in **Areas**.

A **PANEL** encapsulates a period of time roughly around 3-9 seconds in length, about the time it takes to complete one simple action during Combat. The name is an effective guideline: consider an action that would be represented by a single panel of a comic book.

A **PAGE** is a total of all the Panels of each character involved in combat. Once every opponent has completed their Panels, a new Page begins, and so on until the Combat is resolved.

An **AREA** is roughly equivalent to the size of a hotel room or office, *inside*, or about half a city block *outside*, though this is considered flexible, as with time in Panels. Going up or down, a story of a building is considered one Area in height.

I: DECLARATION OF WAR

Before a Page of Combat begins, each player describes their Hero's intentions and the GM decides the intentions of any other characters participating in the battle. Combatants may choose to **Attack**, adopt a **Defensive Tactic**, or perform a **Non-Combat Action**. A player only needs to give a general idea of their intended action at this point.

Robin is cornered by the bounty hunter Miles Folcanet, and both draw swords. Robin's player announces that she is going to Parry, looking for an opportunity to strike a hit or get away. The GM decides that the overconfident Folcanet is going to rush to attack.

II: ORDER OF BATTLE

The GM and one player each roll a single D10. If the Hero's **Intuition** is higher than that of the opponent, they add a **+1 Bonus** to the roll's result (and vice-versa). The side with the higher Total wins Initiative for that Page.

This is important to note: *Arête* can not be used to alter Initiative Rolls.

FOLLOWING THE LEADER

Before a Combat the players elect who is leading them into battle, i.e. who will make Initiative rolls for that Combat and whose Intuition Echelon is used for comparison, which is usually going to be the Hero with the highest Intuition. The same person rolls Initiative for each Page until the Combat ends, but if that Hero is knocked out or otherwise removed from the Combat, the Initiative roll falls to the group member with the *lowest* Intuition for the remainder of the Combat.

Robin Hood's player rolls one ten-sided die and the GM rolls one for Miles Folcanet. Robin rolls a 3 and his Intuition is higher than Folcanet's, so a +1 is added to the result for a total Initiative of 4. However, the GM rolls a 7, so Folcanet has won Initiative this Page.

Any group of player may elect a group **Leader**. The Leader will always roll Initiative for the group when present, and adds a bonus of +1 to their Initiative roll result. Moreover, If the Hero is the elected Leader of their group *and* possesses the Special Trait **LEADERSHIP**, then they *double* their Initiative roll result for the first Page of that combat, *and* raise the bonus to their Initiative Rolls to +2. These bonuses are *cumulative* with the bonus to the roll for the opponent with highest Intuition. A Leader can be voted in or out any time the Heroes are not in Combat, but a new Leader does not receive the benefits until after they have fought one combat in this role.

If Robin Hood, in the previous example, was accompanied by his Merry Men, while Miles Folcanet hired some henchmen, Robin's player would roll Initiative for the group. Robin possesses the Special Trait LEADERSHIP, and is the acknowledged leader of the Sherwood Forest gang, so he adds +3 to his roll result. Moreover, this being the first Page of Combat, Robin doubles his Initiative roll result (from 3 to 6). This means the Merry Men's Initiative total is 9. Meanwhile, the GM rules that Folcanet's group never fought or trained together before (these are just hired thugs), so even though he is the leader of the group, Folcanet gets no bonus to Initiative this combat. Even if he had, however, this only would have brought his Initiative total to 8, and the Merry Men would still act first.

III: CRY HAVOC

Once Initiative is determined, GESTs are rolled in the following order:

1. Any non-combat actions, or any action besides some form of attack, including **Defensive Tactics**, are resolved **first**, starting with the side who won Initiative and then those who lost.
2. All attacks are then resolved, starting again with the side who has Initiative completing their Panels before the side that lost.

NON-COMBAT ACTIONS

For the most part, any action normally resolved by a GEST is handled in the same manner during a Page of Combat, keeping in mind what could be accomplished in around 6 seconds.

MOVEMENT

The most common non-combat action is **Movement**. During Combat, A Hero can choose to Run from one Area to the next, while taking no other action, moving a number of Areas per Panel based on their Endurance Echelon. On the other hand, a Hero may move any where *within* one Area and take a *second action* in the same Panel, *including Attacking*, at a **-2ES Penalty**.

ENDURANCE	AREAS
	PER PANEL
FEEBLE	1
PUNY - EXCELLENT	2
UNCANNY - UNEARTHLY	3



COMBAT GESTs

When a Hero makes an attack, or uses a Defensive Tactic, this is resolved as a **COMBAT GEST**. This is just like any other GEST Roll - the player rolls Percentile Dice and compares the result to The ARG! to find the Colour/Phase Result. The Phase Result is then compared to **The Matrix of Combat Effects! (The MaCE!)** to determine the **COMBAT EFFECT...**

The MaCE (abridged)								
BRAWL	MELEE	SHOOT	THROW	DODGE	PARRY	SLAM?	STUN?	KILL?
FUMBLE	FUMBLE	MISFIRE	FUMBLE	OPEN	OPEN	BOOM!	KO	FATALITY
MISS	MISS	MISS	MISS	-1	-1	BOOM!	KO	SMITE
HIT	HIT	HIT	HIT	AG -3	EVADE	SMACK	DAZE	CLEFT
SLAM	STUN	BULLSEYE	BULLSEYE	AG	FIENT	STAGGER	DAZE	DAZE
STUN	KILL	KILL	STUN	AG +1	RIPOSTE	NO	NO	NO

Behold! The MaCE! Chronicler of Woe!

Specifically, this is an abridged version of The MaCE! covering the most commonly used columns, to illustrate how it is used. Each column represents a category of combat attack, action, or aftermath. The Attribute used for a Combat GEST and the column of The MaCE! consulted is determined by the type of attack the Hero is attempting:

- If the attacker is unarmed, punching, kicking, or head-butting their opponent, they use **FIGHTING** for the Combat GEST and consult the **BRAWL** column of The MaCE!
- If the attacker is wielding a blunt or bludgeoning hand weapon, such as a club or hammer, they also use **FIGHTING** for the Combat GEST and consult the **BRAWL** column of The MaCE! If the attacker is wielding a sharp or edged hand weapon, such as a sword or spear, they use **FIGHTING** for the Combat GEST, but consult the **MELEE** column of The MaCE!
- If the attacker is firing a ballistic weapon, such as a crossbow or hand gun, they use **AGILITY** for the Combat GEST and consult the **SHOOT** column of The MaCE! If the attacker is throwing a weapon at an opponent, they also use **AGILITY** for the Combat GEST, but consult the **THROW** column of The MaCE!

Robin Hood and Miles Folcanet are both wielding swords, so attack using their Fighting Attribute for the Combat GEST and consulting the MELEE column of The MaCE!

DAMAGE

Successful Attacks inflict **DAMAGE** on an opponent. Damage is expressed as an Echelon Rating. When A Hero sustains Damage, they reduce their Stamina Factor by an amount of points equal to the Damage Echelon Rating. What Damage an attack inflicts depends on the type of attack and the weapon used.

- A successful unarmed attack inflicts Damage equal to the attacker's Strength Echelon Rating.
- An attack with a blunt hand weapon also inflicts Damage equal to the attacker's Strength Echelon Rating. However, if the Material Might of the blunt weapon is **equal to or higher** than the wielder's Strength, then the Damage from a successful attack is increased by one Echelon.
- An attack with an edged hand weapon inflicts Damage equal to the weapon's Material Might or the attacker's Strength, *whichever is less*. However, if the weapon's Material Might is *equal or higher than* the wielder's Strength, then the Damage is still increased by one Echelon.
- A thrown weapon inflicts Damage equal to the weapon's Material Might or the attacker's Strength, *whichever is less*.
- Ballistic weapons possess a Damage Rating for their ammunition, unaffected by the attacker's Strength.

The swords wielded by Robin Hood and Folcanet possess Material Eights of Uncanny, and both Robin and Folcanet possess Good Strength. If either makes a successful attack against their opponent, they would inflict Excellent Damage, and the defending player would need reduce their Stamina Factor by 15 points to counter the attack.

COMBAT EFFECTS

Whereas in most GESTs, the Phase Results are left up to the GM to interpret based on the specific circumstances, in Combat The MaCE! Assigns specific Effects. Looking at the abridged MaCE above, the first two columns are Brawl and Melee, used for **Close Combat** attacks. Essentially, this is any unarmed or armed combat with adjacent opponents. The possible Effects from a **BRAWL**ing attack are **FUMBLE** (violet), **MISS** (white), **HIT** (green), **SLAM** (blue), or **STUN** (red).

- The Effects of **FUMBLE**s are kept for the GM's discretion to reveal, hopefully not accompanied by maniacal laughter...
- A White result indicates the attack **MISS**ed, causing no Damage, while a **HIT** inflicts Damage on the opponent defined by the attack type, as discussed above.
- A result of **SLAM** or **STUN** inflicts Damage as per a HIT, but also *might* cause an additional Effect. We say 'might', because in order to trigger a SLAM or STUN Effect, the attacker must possess **STRENGTH** *equal or higher* than the defender's **ENDURANCE**. If so, the defender immediately makes an **Endurance GEST** and compares the result to the **SLAM?** or **STUN?** Column of The MaCE!

Likewise, an attack using the **MELEE** column may result in a FUMBLE, MISS, HIT, STUN, or **KILL**. A **KILL** Effect is handled in a similar manner to a SLAM or STUN, except that in order to trigger the Effect, the attack must inflict at least one point of Damage, not mitigated by armour or other defenses. If the defender loses any amount of Stamina points from the attack, they must immediately make an **Endurance GEST** and compare the result to the **KILL?** Column of The MaCE!

SLAM?

A defender forced to roll on the SLAM? column risks one of the following Effects:

NO (Red) - The defender suffers no additional Effects.

STAGGER (Blue) - The defender is knocked back a few feet or down to one knee, but is fully capable of engaging in combat the next Page. The target is no longer adjacent to the attacker, but no further injury occurs.

SMACK (Green) - The defender is knocked back one Area, plus an additional Area for each Echelon of the attacker's Strength above Excellent.

BOOM! (White/Violet) - The defender is knocked back one Area, plus an additional d10 Areas if the attacker's Strength is Uncanny or greater.

STUN?

A defender forced to roll on the STUN? column risks one of the following Effects:

NO (Red) - The defender suffers no additional Effects.

DAZE (Blue/Green) - The defender is unable to take any actions until after the next Panel.

KO (White/Violet) - The defender is knocked unconscious for d10 Pages.

KILL?

A defender forced to roll on the KILL? column risks one of the following Effects:

NO (Red) - The defender suffers no additional Effects.

DAZE (Blue) - The defender is unable to take any actions until after the next Panel.

A result of **CLEFT** (Green), if scored with a MELEE attack, indicates the defender suffers **Attribute Loss**, regardless of Stamina. Otherwise they are simply knocked unconscious for d10 Pages.

SMITE (White) - The defender suffers **Attribute Loss**.

FATALITY (Violet) - The defender is **Mostly Dead**.

Robin Hood swings at one of Folcanet's goons with his sword, scoring a Red Phase Result! Comparing that to the Melee column of The MaCE!, this is a KILL result. The goon is not wearing any armour, so he takes the full Good (10) points of Damage. The GM makes an immediate Endurance GEST for the goon, scoring a Green Phase Result. This is a CLEFT Effect according to the KILL? column of The MaCE!, so the goon suffers Attribute Loss...

ATTRIBUTE LOSS

When a Hero's Stamina pool drops to zero, they must make an immediate Endurance GEST, with a green or better result indicating they are unconscious for the remainder of the battle, and a further d10 Pages after the combat ends or moves out of the Area. A white or violet result indicates the Hero takes **ATTRIBUTE LOSS**. This represents traumatic injury causing shock and/or bloodloss. If a Hero takes **Attribute Loss** as a result of a roll on the **KILL?** column on The MaCE!, they do not make an Endurance GEST to avoid it.

A Hero suffering from **Attribute Loss** loses one Echelon of Endurance per Page until someone either comes to their aid or their Endurance drops to **ABYSMAL** (an Echelon *below Feeble*). Here, aid is as simple as an ally taking a Panel to check on their condition and bandage them as best as possible until the wounded Hero can get proper medical attention. At this, Attribute Loss ceases and the Hero is unconscious for the remainder of the battle, and a further d10 Pages, as per above.

Any Page after Attribute Loss begins, a Hero can opt to lose an Echelon of *another* Primary Attribute besides Endurance for a Page. In this way a Hero can defer their Endurance falling below Feeble. However, as a consequence, when the Hero is healing, they must make a GEST for every Attribute used in this manner, at it's reduced Echelon. If the GEST fails, the Attribute is permanently reduced by one Echelon!

A Hero can also defer Attribute Loss by spending Arête. Spending 50 pts of Arête will cease Attribute Loss for one Page.

A Hero suffering Attribute Loss can only take an action every other Page, and only if they first score a Red Phase Result on an Endurance GEST at their *current* Endurance Echelon. Additionally, that action suffers a **Phase Shift penalty**, meaning the Result of the GEST is *reduced* by one Colour Phase.

Once a Hero's Endurance drops to Abysmal, they are **Mostly Dead**. Not necessarily "Dead-Dead" yet, if their friends are willing to go to some extraordinary lengths to save them, but the Hero is effectively in a coma.

Folcanet's goon is suffering Attribute Loss after a grievous blow from Robin Hood's sword. The GM immediately reduces the goon's Endurance by one Echelon (from Good to Typical). The other men are still focused on Robin, so no one is coming to the goon's aid. The next Page the goon's Endurance will shift down to Puny.

ARMOUR

Armour reduces the Damage from attacks by a number of Echelons equal to its Material Might. Certain types of attacks reduce the effectiveness of armour, for example Melee attacks reduce the effectiveness of physical armour by one Echelon.

Robin Hood is wearing Good Leather Armour. Normally this will reduce the Damage of any attack by 10 points, but it is one Echelon less effective against Melee attacks, so the Damage from a sword blow by Falconet is only reduced by 5 points.



DEFENSIVE TACTICS

As you can see, Combat can lead to some nasty consequences, and armour only helps so much, so sometimes it's best to play defensively. Whereas Stamina represents a Hero's passive, or reactionary, defense, a Hero who wants to actively avoid injury will employ one of the appropriately entitled **DEFENSIVE TACTICS**. The abridged MaCE! features two common Defensive Tactics: **DODGE** and **PARRY**.

DODGE

Dodging is an attempt to reduce the effectiveness of an attack using Agility. Dodging is considered the same as *moving*, so during a Page wherein a Hero is Dodging, they can take one other action, including making an attack, at a **-2ES Penalty**. A Hero who wishes to Dodge rolls an Agility GEST, comparing the Phase Result to the DODGE column of The MaCE!

On a **Red Phase Result**, all attacks made against the Hero this Page are reduced by the Hero's Agility Echelon Rank +1, taken as an Echelon Shift modifier. With a **Blue Phase Result**, all attacks against the Hero this Page are reduced by a negative Echelon Shift modifier equal to the Hero's unadjusted Agility Echelon Rank. On a **Green Phase Result**, the ES modifier is based on the Hero's Agility Echelon Rank -3 (with a minimum of -1).

Even if a **White Phase Result** is rolled, all attacks against the Hero this Page receive a flat -1ES modifier. On a **Violet Phase Result**, however, the Hero is in trouble. They are 'OPEN,' accidentally maneuvering directly into the line of fire. One adjacent opponent may make an immediate BRAWL or MELEE attack against the Hero (which does not replace the attacker's Panel for that Page, nor count as multiple actions). This attack receives a positive **Phase Shift modifier**.

Robin Hood rolls to Dodge, getting a Blue Result, which imposes an Echelon Shift penalty to opponents equal to Robin's Agility. As Robin possesses a very healthy Agility of Uncanny, all attacks against him receive a -6 ES penalty until the next Page of Combat.

PARRY

Parrying is a Defensive Tactic whereupon a combatant is using their FIGHTING ability to block and deflect blows, biding time for the right opportunity to strike. A Hero must wield a hand weapon (or some makeshift equivalent) in order to Parry. Obviously, Fighting is the Attribute used for the GEST, and the Hero cannot take any other actions this Page.

The results of **White** or **Violet Phase Results** are identical to that of Dodging; either a -1 ES modifier, or the Hero is 'OPEN' and subject to an immediate attack with a Phase Shift Bonus.

EVADE (Green Phase Result) – The Hero successfully defends against all BRAWL or MELEE attacks this Page.

FEINT (Blue Phase Result) - The Hero successfully defends against all BRAWL or MELEE attacks this Page. Moreover, they receive a +2 ES modifier to a single attack the following Page, against an adjacent opponent who attacks them this Page.

RIPOSTE (Red Phase Result) – Not only does the Hero successfully defend against all BRAWL or MELEE attacks this Page, immediately following the first Close Combat attack made against the Hero, they will make a single out-of-sequence counter-attack at that opponent with a +1 Phase Shift modifier.

Robin Hood is Parrying Folcanet's attacks the first Page of combat until he gets a better idea of Folcanet's skill with a sword. Robin makes a Fighting GEST and scores a Blue Phase Result, which is a FEINT according to the PARRY column of The MaCE! Folcanet attacks with his sword, getting a Green Phase Result. Normally this would result in a HIT, but Robin parries the blow and, moreover, will receive a +2 ES modifier to a subsequent attack against Folcanet the next Page of Combat. If both Robin and Folcanet decided to Parry, neither would attack this Page, with both combatants merely circling each other warily. Perhaps while engaging in clever but subtly hostile banter.

RANGED COMBAT

Let's back up a bit and return to the other two attack columns featured on The abridged MaCE!, **SHOOT** and **THROW**. These are considered **Ranged Attacks** as the Hero is not required to be adjacent to their target, or even in the same Area. Ranged Attacks suffer a penalty of -1 ES to hit for every Area they must pass through before reaching the target. Moreover, most Ranged weapons are assigned a maximum Range in Areas that they can traverse.

Ranged Attacks are affected by any penalties to hit from opponents who are **Dodging**, but **Parrying** only works on Close Combat attacks. If a target is moving this Page, a cumulative Penalty of -1ES is applied to the Combat GEST.

SHOOT

A Hero shooting at an opponent is using a ballistic weapon, such as a bow and arrow or handgun. **AGILITY** is used for the Combat GEST, and Damage is determined by the **DAMAGE RATING (DR)** of the weapon. A Shooting attack may result in a FUMBLE, MISS, HIT or KILL Effect, all of which function the same as the previously described Close Combat attacks.

However, a **Blue Phase Result** indicates a **BULLSEYE** Effect that is unique to Ranged Combat. A Hero making a Ranged Attack can announce a specific target less than a foot (30cm) in diameter, and this requires the **Bullseye** Result to succeed. The only caveat is that a **Bullseye** cannot instantly kill the target – that is covered by the Red Phase KILL Effect.

Robin Hood, as we already know, possesses the Special Trait Marksman, allowing him to make Shooting Attacks without the ES penalty to hit for Range. However, let's ignore that for the purpose of this example. Say that Robin takes a shot at an opponent 3 Areas away with his bow. Normally Robin would use his Agility of Uncanny for the Combat GEST, but as he possesses Ultimate Skill! in Archery!, he counts his Agility as Unearthly! However, this is reduced by 3 Echelons, as the target is that many Areas distant, so Robin rolls at Fantastic.

Robin could declare a specific smaller target, such as an attempt to shoot a weapon out of their hands, in which case he would need a Bullseye, or Blue Phase Result, to succeed.

THROW

Throwing an object at an opponent is very similar to Shooting, except the Range is determined by the Thrower's Strength Echelon Rank taken as Areas. Thrown attacks inflict Damage equal to the weapon's Material Might or the attacker's Strength, whichever is less. Just as with Shooting, a Throwing attack takes a penalty to hit for every Area the shot passes through. However,

- If the Hero's Strength is *less* than the Material Might of the projectile, then the attack receives an -1 ES penalty to hit and **to wound** for every Area it pass through after the first. This means the Damage from the attack is reduced by one Echelon for every Area between the thrower and target.
- If the Hero's Strength is *equal or greater* than the Material Might of the projectile, then the attack receives an -1 ES penalty to hit for each Area it passes through after the first, but the Damage is unaffected.

A Hero may also attempt a killing throw, usually aimed at a target's head. The player must announce this before rolling the GEST, and then compares their Phase Result to the SHOOT instead of THROW column of The MaCE!

Robin Hood hurls his dagger at a goon trying to run away, making an Agility GEST. Archery! is not deemed applicable by the GM, so Robin is using his natural Agility of Uncanny. The goon is 2 Areas away and moving, so Robin takes a -3ES penalty, reducing his Uncanny down to Typical. Robin's player doesn't like those odds, so she announces she is spending Arête on this GEST, to ensure a STUN result. Robin's strength is less than the dagger's Material Might, so the Damage inflicted is reduced from Robin's Might of Good (10) to Puny (3). That doesn't concern Robin's player, though, as it's the Effect she's after.

That is the essentials of combat except for two special cases worth keeping in mind...

PULLING PUNCHES

If the attacker wishes to cause *less* than the maximum Damage against an opponent, they can in certain circumstances. This is called **Pulling Punches** (even if the attack isn't a punch *per se*), and

- An Attacker may reduce the Damage and/or the Effect of a BRAWL attack by any amount at will.
- An Attacker *cannot* reduce the Damage or Effect of a MELEE or SHOOT attack.
- An Attacker may reduce the Damage, but *not* the Effect of a THROW attack.

OUTCLASSING

Way back when we first talked about Traits and Phase Shifts we mentioned “*Besides one specific exception that we’ll discuss later, Traits always provide a Passive Bonus to Opposed Rolls, including Combat*”. Well, it is now later, and that exception occurs when opponents are **OUTCLASSED**. In game terms this means that If a Hero’s FIGHTING is 3 or more Echelons *higher* than their opponent, they may apply Phase Shift modifiers to their Combat GESTs from an applicable Trait.

Folcanet’s goons are just the bullies of a small village. Thugs with Puny Fighting, they’ve never seen real combat. They’re just skilled at intimidation. Not skilled enough to fool a veteran soldier like Robin, however, and with his Excellent Fighting he could wallop the two whilst eating an apple. Hence if Robin engaged them in swordplay, he could alter the phase result of his Combat GESTs by one colour as an active use of his SWASHBUCKLING, without spending any Arête!



FINAL WORDS

At this point, you are familiar with 99% of the Phaserip system, the rest is mostly bells and whistles. All of it you will quickly and easily pick up while playing. In the following Issues, we leave Merry Old England for a modern setting of Bronze Age Comics, starting with Issue One "When Wakes the Protagonist". Later on we'll return to the notion of a variety of settings, for the main rules Superheroics acts as a sort of 'meta-genre', encompassing elements of fantasy, science fiction, and pulp horror.

In the coming Issues you will find rules for super powers, psychic abilities, magic, martial arts and advanced or alien technology, all functioning on the simple framework detailed in this Primer.

However, the most important rule is the oft unstated "Rule Zero," which actually applies to all Role-Playing Games (even the ones that deny it). Put simply, the ultimate goal is to have fun, and while these rules were written to serve as a solid base for the myriad adventures that await the Players, a GM should always feel free to break, ignore, or alter any rules that interfere with this premise. Phaserip "RAW" ("Rules As Written") represents what we have found works best for us in our games, but each gaming group is as unique as the individuals comprising it. Over time you will discover what works for your group, what does not, and what is the most entertaining.

If you have any questions, comments, or would like to see how the Phaserip game is progressing, please join us at The RPG Pub forums, the online home of Phaserip.